



Stanford eCorner

Build Trust by Owning Tasks

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April 22, 2015

Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/3515/Build-Trust-by-Owning-Tasks>

When you let others know that you understand what deliverables you are responsible for, you build trust, according to Big Switch Networks Co-Founder Kyle Forster. Conversely, not doing so can silently erode confidence, contribute to an unproductive work environment and a culture of unaccountability, Forster says.



Transcript

I had the unfortunate situation, a couple of years ago I had to fire the highest paid person at Big Switch, certainly one of the smartest and absolutely one of the most qualified. Frankly, he just wouldn't do what he said he was going to do. There's this really tactical thing that I'd urge you to practice in a - whether it's in an internship or in the next job and it sounds really simple, at the end of a meeting, you just say, reiterate, here are the things that I said I was going to do to make sure everybody is clear and if it's not - it's kind of socially awkward and sometimes it is. Write an email sometime that afternoon or evening that says, hey everybody, here is my understanding of what I said I was going to do, I guarantee it impresses people and it builds trust and the really vicious thing about this is if you don't do it, it erodes the kind of trust that nobody will ever tell you. You'll never get feedback about this until it's way too late. It will never show up on a performance review, it will never show up from a friendly colleague, it just doesn't show up until way, way, way past the point when it matters. Beyond just doing it for yourself, I worked for some high performance organizations and frankly I've worked in some pretty low performance organizations and the high-performance organizations over and over, they're staffed with a lot of people who just do what they said they're going to do and at the team level it shows up too, high performance organization, the marketing team tends to do what they say they're going to do. Sales team does it, engineering team does it and in the lower performing ones, in my experience you wind up with well, maybe marketing will deliver this but maybe they won't, so let's have a plan B. Maybe engineering will do this, but maybe they won't, so let's have a plan B or plan C. Maybe sales will deliver this but maybe they won't, so let's have a plan A, B, C and D and by the time you get to the end of it, stuff just doesn't make sense anymore.

You're managing a meeting where everybody's got three, four, five contingency plans and you waste so much time and energy, just trying to get something simple done.